Maintenance Small Grants Program
Request for Proposals

Introduction

Watershed restoration projects like tree planting, rain gardens, bioswales, conservation landscaping, pollinator habitat, and stream buffers generally have two phases: 1) installation and 2) operation and maintenance for the lifespan of the project. Maintaining projects keeps them functioning as designed and ensures aesthetic value, which maintains public support for these investments. We want restoration practices to clean water, cool neighborhoods, and provide habitat benefits long after installation.

In most of our grant programs, the Chesapeake Bay Trust (the Trust) requires short-term maintenance immediately after project installation during the project award period, costs for which can be included in the grant, as well as long-term maintenance plans to be proposed for the post-award period. While required at the time of application, we understand that the unexpected often happens (invasive species that had never been present colonize the area, resources that might have been available at the time become unavailable, people and organizations change). Also, see our "Maintenance for Stormwater Practices – If we build it, can we maintain it?" webinar on this topic: https://cbtrust.org/convenings/.

Factors such as project age, size, and type impact whether maintenance at any one time will cost a few hundred dollars (e.g., invasive species control and plant replacements) or tens of thousands of dollars (e.g., replacing filtering media in large stormwater systems). This program, during its **first pilot year, will focus on the former: small-scale maintenance projects that are $500 or less specifically for invasive species removal/control and/or plant replacements/enhancements.**

While small this first year, our goal is to grow this new program over time. Bear with us and provide feedback as we build it.

Narrative Questions

This program is designed to be simple to use relative to our larger programs. No formal budget will be required in either the application or final report. The final report will consist of a photo(s) of the completed project rather than a written report.

In the online application system, you will be asked to provide responses to the following questions. We recommend answering each question in one or two sentences.

1. What is the voluntary restoration project for which maintenance is requested (e.g., tree planting at Park ABC, rain garden at a School XYZ), when was it originally installed, and who originally funded it? (If you do not know who funded it or when, that is okay).
2. What is the problem requiring maintenance (e.g., invasive vines colonizing a site)?
3. Have maintenance activities ever been performed at this project site before?

4. What maintenance activities will you be performing, who will do the work, and when will this effort start and end? If replacing plants, provide the list of native plants that will be planted.
5. Do you own the property OR do you have property owner permission to do this work? (Include documentation of the approval from the property owner - a copy of an email is acceptable).
6. In the "Supporting Documents" tab, please provide a picture of the site. Do you commit to providing a picture at the project end to demonstrate completion of the maintenance proposed?
7. Anything else you wish to share?

Eligible Project Location and Applicants

This program only funds projects in Maryland. Proposals can only request funds for maintenance on restoration project sites that have voluntarily installed practices. The proposed project site does not need to have been previously funded by the Chesapeake Bay Trust to be eligible.

We welcome applications from homeowners associations, civic groups, youth and service organizations, and other community-based associations; faith-based groups, watershed organizations and other nonprofits, schools; and small municipalities (population less than 5,000).

No more than two applications will be awarded to an organization each year during this pilot period.

Funding Availability and Timeline

As we pilot both the program and the financing mechanism, we have **$8,000 available in funding**. We anticipate making 16 awards in the first year of this program. **Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis** until the amount available has been exhausted for this fiscal year (ending June 30), with anticipation of reopening the program on July 1. Depending on demand, we aim to grow the program and offer more funds in future years.

Expenses must not have already occurred. This program cannot fund reimbursements. Allow six weeks for proposal review before planning to expend resources. Projects must be completed within 12 months upon receipt of the award. Requests to extend the project completion period will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Contact

For help with your application, project guidance, and/or assistance with drafting a budget, contact Whitney Vong, Program Officer, at wvong@cbtrust.org or 410-974-2941 x122.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by reviewers to score your proposal.

- **Justification:** Is the project needed?
- **Scale:** Will the work be enough to make a dent in the scale of maintenance needed?
- **Partnerships and Community**: Does the property owner support the project? Are the people and groups needed to do this work included?

- **Cost Effectiveness**: Is the cost appropriate for the scale of the maintenance activity?

Application Review and Notifications

Applications will be reviewed as they are received. All applicants will receive a letter stating the funding decision. An application may be declined, partially awarded, or fully awarded. If approved, the Trust will send an award agreement with award conditions. The Trust will release the award payment to the requesting organization following upload of the signed award agreement and any possible contingencies by the due date.

The Trust reserves the right to fund projects that advance our mission and meet specific funding priorities.

Online Application Submission Instructions

The Trust uses an online system for the application process, and if awarded, project management. Watch our video on how to apply for and submit an application using our online system at https://cbtrust.org/grants/.

To apply for an award:

1. Go to https://cbtrust.org/grants/maintenance-program/ and click on the "Get Started" button under the "Start a New Application" section.
2. Log in with the email address and password of the Project Leader for the proposed project.
   a) If you have applied in the past, use your existing username and password (if you have forgotten either of these use the 'forgot password' feature).
   b) If you have not used our online system before, click on "New Applicant" and follow the instructions.

By submitting an application to this program, applicants acknowledge that: 1) they are compliant with federal employment and non-discrimination laws and 2) they have not been debarred, convicted, charged or had a civil judgment rendered against them for fraud or related offense by any government agency (federal, state or local) or been terminated for cause or default by any government agency (federal, state, or local).

You will be asked to provide the following information on the online application form.

Eligibility Quiz: This three-question quiz is meant to determine if your project meets program requirements.

Applicant Information Tab:

- Provide the organization's name, mailing address, phone number, and organization type.
- Provide name, title, address, phone, and email address for two separate individuals, either board members or employees of the applicant organization, who can make decisions on behalf of the organization (an Executive Officer) and the project (Project Leader). Individuals associated with for-profit entities to be engaged in the project cannot serve in either role.

Project Information Tab: Provide a project title; in the "Narrative Questions" section add your responses to the "Narrative Questions" which are provided above and copied in the online application; the County, watershed, and legislative district in which the project is located; and the geographic coordinates of the project location.

Supporting Documents Tab: Upload your project site photo(s) here.

Deliverables Tab: Provide estimated metrics for your project such square feet of invasives removed or number of plants planted. Only fill out the metrics that are relevant to your project; leave anything not applicable blank.

Terms and Conditions Tab: Agree to the terms and conditions. <u>This program is supported with funds from the Chesapeake Bay Trust (no federal funds)</u>.

Voluntary Demographics Tab and Survey Tab (optional): Provide demographic information, information about your organization's current diversity and inclusion efforts/goals, and/or feedback on the application process.

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (https://cbtrust.org/) is a nonprofit, grant-making organization dedicated to improving the bays, streams, rivers, forests, parks, and other natural resources of all our local systems, from the Chesapeake to the Coastal Bays to the Youghiogheny River. The Trust, supported in large part by Maryland's Chesapeake Bay License Plate and partnerships with other regional funders, engages and empowers diverse groups to take actions that enrich natural resources and local communities of the Chesapeake Bay region. Since 1985, the Trust has awarded over $210 million in grants to municipalities, nonprofit organizations, schools, and public agencies throughout Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Trust has a mission to empower all people to participate in the restoration and protection of our region's natural resources through its award-making. As a result, the Trust strongly encourages applications directly from or engage communities underrepresented in the environmental space. For more about the Trust's commitment to engage underrepresented groups, see our strategic plan at www.cbtrust.org/strategic-plan and https://cbtrust.org/diversity-inclusion/.